


Strategies for Addressing Diversity in Child Welfare and Child Welfare Research

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Doctoral Research
in Social Work
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- ◆ *"The ethnically competent social worker of today and of the future must be sensitive to ethnic considerations and competent in dealing with ethnic concerns."*

Leigh(1985) "The Ethnically Competent Social Worker."

Overview Of Presentation


- ◆ Challenges faced by practitioners and researchers
 - ◆ Child welfare research findings related to diverse populations
 - ◆ Illustration of diversity issue in practice and research
 - ◆ Accessing and utilizing data to improve practice
 - ◆ Recommendations for researchers and practitioners
 - ◆ Suggested areas of research
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Children's Protective Services



CPS was called by former Texas Judge Scott McCown (1998)


"a leaky rescue boat, so heavily loaded with children...that it moves slowly to the scene of the next crisis and once there has little space for new passengers. "



Understanding the Boat



Child Welfare Public and Private System

- ◆ Intersects with and is influenced by:
 - ◆ Juvenile Justice
 - ◆ Welfare
 - ◆ Criminal Justice
 - ◆ Federal and State policy
 - ◆ Education
 - ◆ Health Care
 - ◆ Child Care
 - ◆ Mental Health
 - ◆ Structural Oppression
 - ◆ Media
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Mental Health

- ◆ In 2001, parents placed over 12,700 children into child welfare or juvenile justice systems to get mental health services (GAO, 2003).

Education

Due to differential perception, African American youth are unconsciously perceived to be more belligerent than white students and are more likely to be recommended for detention, suspension, expulsion, and school officials are more likely to recommend that they be placed in foster care due to truancy, aggressiveness or as persons in need of services (Hill, 2005).


Juvenile Justice

AA youth are more likely than white youth, with the same offenses, to be referred to juvenile court, to be detained prior to trial in secure facilities, to be formally charged in juvenile court, to be waived for disposition in adult courts, and to be committed to a juvenile or adult correctional institution (Youth law Center 2000)

Health Care

In 2000, more than 125,000 American children lost one or both parents to AIDS, 80% of whom were African American or Hispanic (United Press, International 2001)

Disproportionate representation of African Americans experiencing chronic disease in the U.S. is linked to disproportionate poverty and lack of access to health care facilities (Okundaye, Lawrence-Webb, Thornton, 2005).

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Health Care

An African American infant is more than twice as likely as a white infant to die before its first birthday.

Child Care

- ◆ Especially important for AA low income and poverty stricken families—many are single parent, female headed and need affordable child care to maintain a job or participation in a training program.

Links to Child Welfare

- ◆ Poverty
 - ◆ Growth of single parent families
 - ◆ Impact of welfare reform
 - ◆ Child support
 - ◆ Neglect is often product of poverty/high visibility
 - ◆ Child maltreatment
 - ◆ Judicial system
 - ◆ Homelessness
 - ◆ Substance Abuse
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Substance Abuse

- ◆ Alcohol and drug related cases more likely to result in foster care placements than other cases (DHHS, 1999)
- ◆ Parental substance abuse is a key barrier to reunification

Links

- ◆ Domestic Violence
 - ◆ Foster Care
 - ◆ Racial Disparities/Diversity
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Diversity: Challenges for Practitioners and Researchers

- Understanding the Client Population/Data needs
 - Differential Impact of Services on specific Populations
 - Differential Impact of Policy on specific populations
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Recognize Causes

- ◆ As Courtney asked in 1996, "Do child welfare researchers, policymakers, and practitioners believe that it is ethically acceptable to be involved in improving the efficacy of a system that takes these children without simultaneously being involved in remedying the problems that bring the children to the system?"

Child Welfare Research: In Search of Answers

Disproportionality in Child Welfare



According to AFCARS estimates for Sept. 2003

◆ 523,000 children in the foster care
system

- ◆ White, 39%
- ◆ Black, Non-Hispanic 35%
- ◆ Hispanic, 17%
- ◆ AI/AN Non Hispanic 2%
- ◆ Asian/PI NI Non-Hispanic 1%
- ◆ Unknown 3%
- ◆ Two or more races 2%

Ohio Data

- ◆ 22,000 children in out of home care
 - ◆ 2800 awaiting adoption
- ◆ Children who wait the longest are AA, over 10, part of sibling group

Disproportionality/ Overrepresentation

- If a particular racial/ethnic group of children is represented in foster care at a higher percentage than they are represented in the general population

U.S. Child Population under 18 (% in care)

- ◆ 61% White (39% in care)
- ◆ 17% Hispanic/Latino (17% in care)
- ◆ 15% African American (35% in care)
- ◆ 3% Asian American (1% in care)
- ◆ 1% American Indian/AN (2% in care)

Drilling Down—Trend Data



1980's and 90's--present


– Growing Numbers of Children in Care

- ◆ 1982: 262,000 children in care (52% were Anglo)
- ◆ 1993: 429,000 (38% Anglo)
- ◆ 2000: 588,000 (35% Anglo)
- ◆ 2002: 532,000 (39% Anglo)
- ◆ 2003: 523,000 (39% Anglo)

Reasons--Child Maltreatment

- ◆ Increase in maltreatment
 - Increase in poverty
 - Lindsey (1991) and Pelton (1989)
 - Parental income is the best predictor of child removal and placement
- ◆ Majority of children in care from single parent, low-income households

American Indian and Alaska Native Experience

- Different from all other minority populations
 - Must understand history
 - Interrelated issues
 - ◆ Education
 - ◆ Health
 - ◆ Mental health
 - ◆ Substance Abuse
 - ◆ Indian Child Welfare Act
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Health

- Indian Health Service reports that the infant mortality rate in their service areas is 26% higher than the U.S. all races rate


Poverty Rates (1999)

- ◆ Non Hispanic Whites 8.1%
- ◆ Asians 12.6%
- ◆ Hispanics 22.6%
- ◆ African Americans 24.9%
- ◆ American Indians 25.7%

Asian and Pacific Islanders—Within Group Diversity

◆ Chinese	23.8%
◆ Filipino	18.3%
◆ Asian Indian	16.2%
◆ Vietnamese	10.9%
◆ Korean	10.5%
– Japanese	7.8%
◆ Cambodian	1.8%
◆ Hmong	1.7%
◆ Laotian	1.6%
◆ Pakistani	1.5%
◆ Thai	1.1%

Pacific Islanders

- ◆ Hawaiian
 - ◆ Samoan
 - ◆ Guamanian
 - ◆ Tongans
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Diversity Among Asians

- ◆ Median Family Income of Asians higher than that of whites
 - However, many family members in the work force than the national average
 - Poverty rate for Asian/Pacific Islanders was slightly higher than the national average.
 - High poverty rates:
 - ◆ Hmong 38%
 - ◆ Cambodians 29.3%

Asian Child Welfare Issues

Increased child abuse reporting in new immigrant communities

Need services in native languages
(Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese,
Korean, Lao, Samoan, Thai,
Vietnamese)

Lack of Asian/Pacific foster homes and adoptive homes

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Diversity Among Hispanics

- ◆ Population increased by more than 57.9% since 1990
- ◆ 35% under age 18
- ◆ 12.5% of population
 - 7.3% Mexican
 - 1.2% Puerto
 - .4% Cuban
 - 3.5% other


Understanding Disproportionality

- ◆ Conference: Racial Geography of the Child Welfare System (Roberts, 2006)

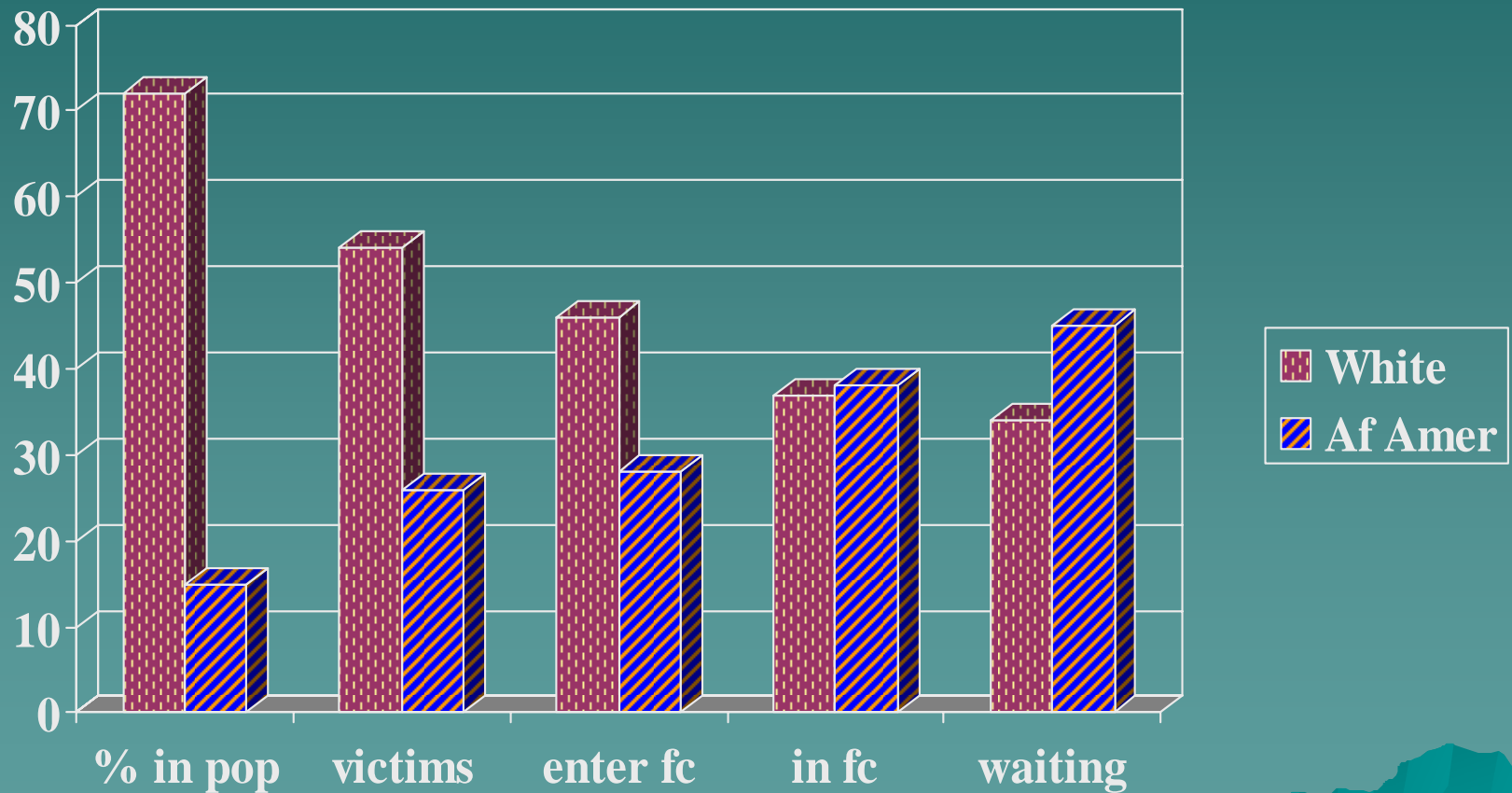
Several recent studies:

- ◆ NIS-1, NIS2, NIS3--estimates about incidence of child abuse and neglect
 - Reported no differences in incidence of child abuse and neglect by racial group
 - ◆ Issues raised about sample selection bias raise questions about validity/possible undercount

Caseload flow of children

- ◆ Report/no report
 - ◆ Investigation/no investigation
 - ◆ Substantiation/No substantiation
 - ◆ Case closed/no services/in home services/out of home care (kin,foster)
 - ◆ Reunification/Adoption/Remain in care or age out
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Percent of African American vs. White Children: in population, victims, entering foster care, in foster care, and waiting for adoption



Child Maltreatment 2002: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cm02/index.htm>, p. 23


National Adoption and Foster Care Statistics: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/afcars/publications/afcars.htm>

Estimates based on AFCARS data 3/04

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of the Waiting Children

- ◆ 119,000 children waiting for adoption
 - 40% are Black
 - 37% are White
 - 14% are Hispanic
 - 2% are American Indian/AN
 - 0% Asian or Pacific Islander
 - 3% Two or more races

Ohio Adoption Data: FY 2005

- ◆ 22,000 children living with foster families or in another out of home placement setting
 - ◆ 2,800 are waiting for adoptive families
 - ◆ African American children, those over 10 and are part of a sibling group wait the longest.
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Time from PC to Adoption in months in Ohio

- ◆ White 55% 15.31 months
- ◆ African American 43% 20.89 months
- ◆ Asian/Pacific Islander .1% 26.09 months
- ◆ American Indian .9% 16.69 months
- ◆ Unknown 1.3%

Courtney (1996) reported inequities from

- ◆ child maltreatment reporting
- ◆ service provision
- ◆ kinship care
- ◆ family preservation

Courtney (1996) reported inequities from

- ◆ exit rates
- ◆ length of care
- ◆ placement stability
- ◆ adoption
- ◆ Majority of racial differences reported were between African Americans and Anglos rather than any other group

Theories of Disparities

- ◆ Spatial concentration of child welfare supervision in communities of color.
- ◆ Lindsey (1991)—parents' income level was best predictor of child's removal (national survey data analysis of those who received supportive services and those placed in care)


Jenkins and Diamond (1985)

- ◆ –Higher probability for minority children to be placed in foster care when living in a geographic area where they are relatively less represented (more visible).

Visibility Hypothesis

- ◆ Garland, et.al (1998) tested this hypothesis using population of minors referred to receiving facility in San Diego.
 - No race/ethnicity differences re siblings
 - More visible a child was in community, more likely child would be placed in foster care.
 - ◆ Pattern only present for African American children—not Hispanic or Asian children.
 - ◆ Pattern not related to socioeconomic characteristics, as these were equal among AA and Hispanic

Meaning of Visibility pattern

- ◆ Need to examine institutional racism, policies and procedures, practices of workers, individual child and family factors affecting risk for foster placement.
 - ◆ Need to examine how this pattern is manifested in identification, investigation, placement decisions, service provision, and reunification plans.
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Unintentional Bias

- ◆ Robert Hill (2004) suggested that many caseworkers are looking out for the best interests of children, but many may be culturally insensitive to minority groups.

Barth (2001)

suggests multiplicative model

- “There are small to medium increases in the disproportionality by population experienced by AA children as they move through the child welfare system, which results in substantial differences in their representation in child welfare compared to their representation in general population”
- Argues greater risk for child abuse and neglect in AA families
- Reentry rates highest for AA children

Garland, et al (1998)

- ◆ Reported that race/ethnicity is a factor in determining placement of African American children and not simply a confound related to socioeconomic factors


Group Based Harm

- ◆ Dorothy Roberts (2002) Shattered Bonds
 - Systemic racial disparity inflicts group based harm
 - Negative stereotyping occurs when someone creates a mental model of a group from a composite of unfavorable characteristics of a few group members
 - Creates negative message: Black parents are unfit to raise their children; black children are better off in state's custody
 - Racially based destruction of families

Addressing Disproportionality

- ◆ National Adoption Information Clearinghouse:
 - State and Local Efforts to Mitigate Disproportionality
 - <http://basis1.ccalib.com/BASIS/chdocs/docs/canweb/SF>
- ◆ Casey Family Programs Breakthrough Series
- ◆ Race Matters Consortium (racemattersconsortium.org)

Workers and researchers need knowledge of culture

- impact of racism and poverty on behavior, attitudes, values
 - Help seeking behaviors
 - Role of language, speech patterns, communication styles
 - Impact of social service policies on clients of color
 - Power relationships
 - Privilege
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Implications:

- ◆ Need to change how workers are trained
 - Need to know the significance of race and ethnicity
 - Need to understand disproportionate impact
- ◆ Need for more knowledge about uses of data


Child Welfare Research Issues

- ◆ Becerra and Brooks called for accurate and complete data on the race and ethnicity of all referrals and active cases.
- ◆ Use available data for better understanding and decision making


Data Sources

- ◆ Child and Family Service Reviews
- ◆ The AFCARS, or Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, is a federal data collection effort that provides child-specific information on all children covered by the protections of Title IV-B and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Examples of Other Data Sources (U.S Children's Bureau)

- Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)
 - National Child Welfare Center for Data and Technology
 - LONGSCAN-Longitudinal studies of Child abuse and Neglect
 - National survey on Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)
 - National Incidence Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect
 - State by State Fact Sheets
 - Child Maltreatment Annual Reports
 - Census data
 - Project data
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Data Issues

- ◆ Need to track substance abuse of parents as cause of child maltreatment
 - ◆ Unwieldy data systems
 - ◆ Lack of coordination between forecasting and service delivery
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Funding Sources

- ◆ Depends on topic, scope, type of research
 - Federal
 - State
 - Foundation
 - Local


Selected Child Welfare Research, Policy, and Practice Issues Today

- ◆ Disproportionality/Key decision points
- ◆ Kinship care
- ◆ Family group conferencing
- ◆ Transracial adoptions of older children
- ◆ Gay and Lesbian Adoptions
- ◆ Open adoptions
- ◆ Child preparation
- ◆ Sibling placements
- ◆ Barriers to placements
- ◆ Older child placements
- ◆ Causes of abuse and neglect
- ◆ Prevention
- ◆ Recruitment of foster and adoptive families
- ◆ Family preservation/reunification

Selected Research Issues

- ◆ Matching children and families
- ◆ Public foster care schools
- ◆ Foster Parent Adoptions
- ◆ Impact of privatization/managed care
- ◆ Children aging out of care
- ◆ Impact of methamphetamines
- ◆ Workforce issues
- ◆ Intercountry adoptions
- ◆ Intersections between substance abuse, mental health and family violence
- ◆ Customer satisfaction data/assess
Agency performance
- ◆ Effectiveness of contracting agencies in providing services in culturally competent manner

Additional Research Topics

- ◆ Decision making in child welfare
 - ◆ Factors influencing case load size
 - ◆ Perceptions of CPS by African American families
 - ◆ Attachments in older child placements
 - ◆ Self esteem of children in foster care
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Child Welfare Research Needs

- ◆ Culturally appropriate family focused assessment and intervention with American Indian populations
- ◆ On AdoptUsKids website,
 - 84% of the children waiting 6 years are male, and all five of the African-American children who have been waiting 7 years or more are male.

Need to follow these kids longitudinally and determine what efforts are made to place them. Examine gender and race issues in placements

Challenge to Researchers and Practitioners and Policy Makers

- ◆ Addressing the Issue

- ◆ A hundred years from now, it will not matter how much money I had in my bank account, what kind of car I drove. It will only matter that I was important in the life of a child.

◆ THE CHILDREN
ARE
WAITING.



